

First Steps Family Survey

Statewide Summary

April 2010

Total surveys mailed out: 4351

Number of surveys returned: 1165

1. How old is your child?					
137 (11.76%)	327 (28.07%)	570 (48.93%)	126 (10.82%)	5 (0.43%)	
Less than one year	1 yr - less than 2 yrs	2 yrs - less than 3 yrs	3 years and over	Did not answer	
2. At what age did your child first begin receiving First Steps services?					
633 (54.33%)	278 (23.86%)	206 (17.68%)	4 (0.34%)	44 (3.78%)	
Less than one year	1 yr - less than 2 yrs	2 yrs - less than 3 yrs	3 years and over	Did not answer	
4. It was easy to learn about First Steps.					
504 (43.67%)	538 (46.62%)	89 (7.71%)	23 (1.99%)	8	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
5. It was easy to find out if my child was eligible for services.					
561 (48.40%)	521 (44.95%)	63 (5.44%)	14 (1.21%)	4	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
6. It was easy to obtain the services that are needed for my child and family.					
601 (51.94%)	476 (41.14%)	63 (5.45%)	17 (1.47%)	4	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
7. No unnecessary services were included in the IFSP.					
689 (60.44%)	423 (37.11%)	19 (1.67%)	9 (0.79%)	18	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
8. When my child was evaluated, all concerns about my child's development raised by me and others were addressed.					
751 (64.85%)	382 (32.99%)	19 (1.64%)	6 (0.52%)	2	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
9. The results of my child's assessments or evaluations were explained to me in ways I understood.					
738 (63.73%)	405 (34.97%)	13 (1.12%)	2 (0.17%)	3	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
10. I received information and explanations about our family's rights to file a child complaint.					
623 (55.97%)	424 (38.10%)	57 (5.12%)	9 (0.81%)	36	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
11. I received information and explanations about our family's parental rights.					
673 (58.98%)	447 (39.18%)	17 (1.49%)	4 (0.35%)	12	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
12. I feel the service coordinator listens to me and encourages my opinions.					
753 (64.97%)	365 (31.49%)	24 (2.07%)	17 (1.47%)	3	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
13. Our service coordinator helps my family get the services we need in a timely manner.					
698 (60.43%)	390 (33.77%)	42 (3.64%)	25 (2.16%)	4	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
14. In creating our Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), I am asked about areas where our family feels things are fine and where we feel we need help.					
762 (66.32%)	376 (32.72%)	5 (0.44%)	6 (0.52%)	11	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	
15. We receive all the services listed in our Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).					
760 (66.61%)	362 (31.73%)	14 (1.23%)	5 (0.44%)	16	
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply	

16. All the services I felt necessary were included in the IFSP.

738 (64.17%)	380 (33.04%)	21 (1.83%)	11 (0.96%)	7
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

17. First Steps service providers were effective and knowledgeable in working with my child's disability.

775 (67.45%)	345 (30.03%)	22 (1.91%)	7 (0.61%)	13
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

18. I feel the First Steps service providers listen to me and respect my opinions.

811 (69.97%)	330 (28.47%)	12 (1.04%)	6 (0.52%)	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

19. First Steps services give my family the tools to directly improve my child's development.

766 (66.09%)	375 (32.36%)	10 (0.86%)	8 (0.69%)	3
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

20. The services included in the IFSP were explained so that I understood them.

727 (63.38%)	412 (35.92%)	5 (0.44%)	3 (0.26%)	8
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

21. I believe the services my child and family receive are appropriate and necessary.

794 (68.57%)	345 (29.79%)	13 (1.12%)	6 (0.52%)	3
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

22. Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings are scheduled at a time and place that are convenient for me and my family.

803 (70.50%)	319 (28.01%)	13 (1.14%)	4 (0.35%)	17
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

23. Over the past year, First Steps services have helped me and/or my family:

a. To participate in everyday routines even though we have a child with special needs.

606 (60.24%)	372 (36.98%)	20 (1.99%)	8 (0.80%)	142
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

b. Feel more confident in my skills as a parent/guardian.

654 (59.56%)	413 (37.61%)	24 (2.19%)	7 (0.64%)	51
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

c. Understand my child's needs.

685 (61.32%)	409 (36.62%)	15 (1.34%)	8 (0.72%)	34
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

d. Be more optimistic about my child's future.

699 (63.49%)	379 (34.42%)	16 (1.45%)	7 (0.64%)	47
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

24. Since being part of First Steps, I can work with professionals.

591 (57.49%)	417 (40.56%)	16 (1.56%)	4 (0.39%)	109
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

25. Since being part of First Steps, I know how to advocate for what my child needs.

626 (56.91%)	443 (40.27%)	27 (2.45%)	4 (0.36%)	49
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

26. Our family is better off because of the First Steps program.

794 (70.20%)	312 (27.59%)	15 (1.33%)	10 (0.88%)	22
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

27. Our child is better off because of the First Steps program.

855 (74.74%)	269 (23.51%)	10 (0.87%)	10 (0.87%)	8
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply

28. Approximately how often does your family use the help of your service coordinator?

344 (30.31%)	117 (10.31%)	344 (30.31%)	309 (27.22%)	21 (1.85%)
Weekly	Bi-Weekly	Monthly	Every six months	Annually

Annual First Steps Family Survey 2010

Note: Comments are typed as written on the surveys with the exception of the correction of most misspellings. Names and other personally identifiable information of children, families and providers have been redacted.

Only complaint is that we have 3 service coordinators in less than a year. This resulted in delay of some services and disruption to overall plan.

The individual and group speech therapy sessions provided by First Steps made a tremendous improvement in my sons speech. I cannot thank the service providers enough for all they have done for my son. This is an amazing program and we were lucky to be able to have this source offered to us.

I have had 2 kids in 1st steps. My 13 month old (now 2 1/2) had problems with her motor skills=walking, sitting up, standings. With the help of physical therapy through 1st steps she now runs, jumps, climbs, and plays like a normal 2 1/2 yr old child.

My son was 2 when we started 1st steps. He needed bilateral tubes and didn't speak more than 10 words. He screamed, yelled, fought, hit, and hand tantrums constantly. Within 6 months of entering 1st steps you could understand 90% of his speech perfectly. There were no more massive tantrums because the therapist helped me learn how to help him.

I firmly believe that without 1st steps he would have been a "child left behind." He now speaks, plays, and learns the same level as other 3 1/2 yr old children. Thank Heaven for 1st steps.

Bless you all,
parent name

Finding the First Steps program was a blessing. She has been extremely supportive. In the three months that we've been working with them, many of my sons difficulties have improved. I am very grateful for this program.

It would be nice if First Steps could offer more parent resources. What they do for the child is great but I feel that with a child about to enter the school system I am a little lost on what my child needs and should be getting.

Our service coordinator is helpful, But not very personable at all. There had been times when I left phone messages & emails for her and it was 1-2 weeks before receiving a reply.

Our service providers were Excellent! I can't say enough for them.. wonderful people! Thank you! =)

We were unsure about transitioning to ECSE in school dist & @ 1st declined services & then we decided to have services closer to my son's B-day. I asked if services could be extended through the summer (his B-day is in late March) and was told no - he'd have to have an April - July Birthday - too late sorry. - His Birthday is only a few days from April & now we have no summer services so far. I called our service coordinator & she was supposed to send me some resources for summer. That was 10 day ago & I still haven't rec'd anything.

Services were great!! Coordinator needs to do her job better. I feel like we were put on back burner By her @ times. I know we were in program just a short time, But we still needed help.

Learned about First Steps from NICU.

I am concerned about the fact that therapy assistants are not allowed at meetings any longer. My child receives services weekly by an assistant and I want her at the meetings. Although, the supervisor comes every 3rd week it is in my opinion very necessary for her to be there. I would ask that someone look into this issue and see why this change has occurred and is it really best for the child. Thank you

We love our therapist and coordinator. This program has been essential to my family and child. Thank you!

Our child receives services from therapists that work on the special Learning Center utilizing First Step's "team" model. The therapists that was assigned to be her team leader must see her more often than any others, and others cannot see her without the presence of the team leader. This model is no longer helping our child. Because of the structures of the team, she may only see a speech therapist once a month, and she cannot see the cognitive/behavioral therapist at all except for approved evaluations. She must receive therapy here at home, but this setting does nothing to encourage her to work with her therapists. We cannot even assign the "team leader" position to another therapist that she needs to see more often. The "team model doesn't work.

I was very pleased with all the services provided. I credit our P.A.T. to introducing us to First step & recognizing our son has some learning issues. I am thankful & blessed by this program. Thank you can not express how much we enjoyed this program. I would recommend this to any parent that feels their child might need help.

First Steps & the ladies who have came out to help my son - need a big pat on the back! My son has improved SO much & I appreciate their help in me being a better mother as well, as now I have a better understanding in how to work w/ and teach my son!

Developmental therapist should be therapist & not social workers or case coordinators. These kids need activities directed towards their disabilities. Not typical/age activities. We were being referred to different Doctors/therapist per our developmental therapist. I felt like that's what they were in our home for. She also went on to say she thought our son may be autistic. We had never taken him to a neurologist. Its not there place to DX. We love our OT & speech therapist they were wonderful. It was a pleasure to have them in our home. Our son has improved so much. They were great with him. We owe them so much!

Thank you

We have been thru several service coordinators in the last 2 years. It would be nice to see less turnover of this position. Thank you

I would like to say thank you to my child First Step staff

My service provider - Kid Partners Inc., has been excellent - both our PT & language therapist. Really outstanding. We've had two different service coordinators and both have been well-meaning but sort of disorganized. Not terrible but not great.

I love the First Steps program and the therapists that came for my son. I think this is a wonderful program to have. Having a child with a disability isn't as overwhelming with First Steps by our side. Thank you!!

Our second service coordinator was very knowledgeable and addressed our concerns. I made a complaint to the director for the 1st service coordinator who was completely inappropriate, unprofessional and not knowledgeable about services or needs.

We love her & she has done a great job w/ our son. We are so impressed w/ the program. We are very blessed to have 1st steps in our home.

Our service coordinator is one of the best people that has ever worked with my family. She is always on time. She always answers any questions we have, etc. My son just loves her. Just thought all would like to hear the good news.

I am very grateful for the program & the help it has given our daughter over the past few years. All of the people we have worked with have been wonderful. The program has also lifted the huge financial burden that many of the services would have cost us where we couldn't have afforded them. Thanks.

My daughter was born with seizures and had a stroke while still in the womb. My husband and I appreciate our first steps provide coming out and being there to help with our concerns. They help out a lot. Very pleased with what you guys do for our child and others.

My son gets speech therapy once a week. He would progress much faster getting it 2-3 times a week. I work with him using the techniques I learn but he responds to the speech therapist in a more concentrated way. Also, First Steps should focus more on him talking and preparing him for school instead of labeling things and saying one word a day.

We received very good developmental assessment and tips for working with our daughter's development are where she needed improvement. The care we have received has been much better than the hospital therapists we have seen. First Steps always worked hard to seek assistance for us, when it seemed no one else would listen to us.

Though I found it easy to get services for my son through First Steps...it did take many phone calls & several (4-5 weeks) weeks to get everything rolling. Had I not been persistent with my phone calls I am not confident that things would have been taken care of for my son. However, once we were in the system I knew who to call - things have been great & I've been very impressed with the services provided. Thank You.

The first steps coordinator was assigned to us tends to hear one thing and then say another. She was not always accurate in what she was reporting in our IFSP. I had to correct her a few times. My husband I and would tell her certain behavior's or actions of our child and then she would exaggerate or get what we told her completely wrong. At a meeting we had with the school district she told the teacher that our child needed occupational therapy as well. At no time what's so ever did she discuss this with my husband or me. I felt blindsided. We knew or we thought we knew what our child's needs were. The therapist that has been provided is amazing. We have seen a tremendous improvement in just a month.

To whom it may concern,

First Steps has done so many wonderful things for my children. I know that we would have had a very difficult life right now if we wouldn't have been directed to First Steps. Our service coordinator is always willing to listen to each of our concerns and she goes the extra mile to make sure our needs and worries are addressed. The therapists work extra hard and provide me with so many insights and ideas to help my two boys live a normal life. First Steps is a wonderful program and I am so thankful to everyone involved with it. Without First Steps so many children and families would be lost. Thank you for everything that you do.

Thank you.

Please feel free to contact me. I am more than willing to help in any way I can.

We loved our service coordinator. She was/is great. She is a huge help to our family

I appreciate the staff that has help me and my child thank u so much!

Feel more SLT need to understand approximant. Many don't get it & need more education on the issue.

I just want to say that the people who came to my home were extremely helpful and very sweet polite and kind. Thank you for all your program has done for my son.

Our service coordinator, does an outstanding job of making us feel comfortable with the 1st Steps program, she routinely checks on my child's progress & follows up with how our therapists are performing. She regularly checks in with me to see if I have any questions or concerns. Meetings are scheduled timely and useful and accurate information is provided to me. Great job!

I feel the coordinator was not always as organized as she should have been. She doesn't always get back to me in a timely method and the people who worked with any child were usually the ones to answer questions and advise one. The person that was taking over after First Steps called me to see when she was to take over for First Steps. She was not notified when my child was turning 3 and leaving First Steps.

Our service coordinator was very friendly & kind, but not very efficient or knowledgeable about the process. I know that she was new & may not be working there any longer.

Our speech therapist should be recognized. She has been a true blessing to our family in more ways than one. She has given us & our daughter the foundation for a very bright & successful future. She is a truly gifted therapist, & we are glad we got her!

We feel very lucky to have been partnered with our service providers. Without being matched up with these particular individuals I believe our son would have many more delays in his development and life skills. We have also been very happy working with our service coordinator. She is is very knowledgeable of the First Steps program and has helped us figure out how to access and feel confident that the services our son receives are the right ones to meet his needs. Our son has greatly benefitted from this program and the services he has secured.

We would like to add a comment about our wonderful and special services provider. She is doing an amazing job with our son, who has made a very impressive progress thanks to her. She is very attentive, quick to understand where exactly he is standing at each period of time and what he needs. Very creative and find interesting ways for him to learn. WE are thankful to her and the First Step Program.

All I can say is thank you for such a wonderful program. I have two typical children and then our third came along with some special needs. I have a degree in Child Development but still didn't know what to do for my son to give him the best start to life. He has a whole team of people looking out for him now. They have helped prepare him for everyday obstacles. I have no doubt that he will be a successful adult because of the help he received early in life! Thank you first steps!

Thank you for all that you all have done for me & my son. You have blessed us.

My vision therapist has been the greatest. She has seen my daughter since she was 6 months old. We have gone so far in her development because of the help and guidance. This woman really knows what she is doing. I feel like she is part of my family and my daughter really responds to her. I think she deserves Therapist of the Year. I am so glad my parents as teacher person told me about First Steps I don't even want to think about where we would be without your help. Thank You so much for your support and help.

First Steps is a great program. Our son has both physical and occupational therapy. Without First Steps financially we would have never been able to get him the help he needs. I'm so glad our state offers such a great program!

We have primarily worked with an occupational therapist. We had a 24 week premature baby. Jennifer has been wonderful. She has been knowledgeable and extremely helpful in guiding our son's development. She has made herself available for questions outside our sessions. Our experience with First Steps has been very positive

I have had 2 service coordinators. The first one was excellent. The current one - not as attentive. Takes awhile to get things done and have a return call. Appears they are overwhelmed w/ too many clients?

completely satisfied

This program has helped during one of the most difficult times in our life. I've grown close to the therapists, and they have helped me almost as much as they have helped my son. My only words of improvement would be to really explain the process of what an IFSP is, what happens when they turn 3, etc, maybe in a visual manner on paper with a timeline. I don't feel I really understand the program for the 1st year we were involved...plus we were going through a lot of emotion to really take it all in. I also didn't feel we had a very great relationship w/ our service coordinator. I've talked to other parents and they had nothing but great things to say, but that just wasn't the case with us. Thanks again for the wonderful program, our family definitely better for it.

I am very sad that my time w/ the coordinators & therapists has ended. Our family has really learned so much & helped others in our family to understand the challenges our child will face thanks our staff which I will miss most of all b/c they have worked with our son a little before he was one yrs. First Steps does make a difference & really want to make the best of the First years when children are receptive to learn. The extra encouragement therapy & concerns to my family from first steps are magnificent & I can't thank you enough

I left 26 & 27 blank because I am not convinced of the benefit compared to my out of pocket costs. The information given me by the physical therapists I was also able to research online very easily. Also the billing practices are very poor and disappointing. I am very displeased with this entire process.

I have a greater piece of mind. I've gain the skills needed to help in my son's development. I'm confident about my son's future because of First Step. Thanks!

First Steps has been an invaluable resource to my family. I don't know where we'd be without them. Everyone is so nice + helpful!!! :)

My son was not talking, allowing us to interact in play with him, and made for a very difficult - stressful day to day life. Since first steps has started seeing him there has been a tremendous change. He has a speech therapist & OT and a special Educator. He is talking and communicating with everyone and is playing together with family & friends. I truly believe that if first steps had not worked with him he would still at 2 yrs old not be doing any of these things. I still feel he has issues but it is so much better because of first steps. They have guided me in the right direction and it is helping. I will be every so grateful to them for helping us when I thought their was no hope of living a normal life. The following women are wonderful at what they do & I thanks every one of them. I would have been lost with them and so would have my son. [List of staff]. Thank You.

I am very thankful for the First Steps program. With getting the help we needed, my son has made tremendous progress in a year.

I'm sure a lot of my answers will change in the future, now that we have a new worker coming. Started in April-10! Answers based on past 1 & 1/2 yrs (poor worker.)

I am very impressed with the staff. They are a huge help.

never received supplies that were ordered. Also, through MOOG, we are finding that there are things 1st steps should help w/ or cover & these services were never mentioned such as storage/sterilizer case for hearing aides.

I was referred to the First Steps program through my Parents As Teachers Provider. I was not aware of the program prior to her referral. I would like to give credit to the Parents As Teachers & the First Steps Program for my children's development & special needs. I am in total support of both programs & whole heartedly believe these programs are beneficial and necessary services for all Missouri Children.

First Steps is a very good program I will recommend a lot of families to first steps program

I heard the new plan which will become effective in 2013. It does no good for a family to have the therapists meet with each other but not individually with a family. This is a horrible idea, and I hope you reconsider.

The services we receive from First Steps are wonderful! All of the therapists and our coordinator are fantastic!

I love everything First Steps has done for my son and family. He was 3.5 months early and had a very long hard road in front of him. We were told many times he may not walk or has some type of CP from the NICU. Since First Steps has come into our lives, my son is crawling and standing. Hopefully he will be walking soon! He has a feeding tube, but she has been working with him. I want to thank First Steps for helping my son come so far. I just wish we could have more appointment with OT & PT instead of just one a month.

I know a lot of my answers will change in the future. Now I have a new worker, started in April 2,010! this last past 1 1/2 yrs. I had a worker that didn't do much of Anything at all. (poor job)

We are very thankful for the Missouri First Steps Program. As a teacher I understand the importance of early detection is extremely important, and that children will do a better early on w/ help! The staff was THE BEST on getting our daughter the help she needed! We will be eternally grateful to this program for all the help with our daughter!

"Great Program"

Our speech therapist did a wonderful job with my son. We are missing her greatly.

Just a special thank to the staff. My child loves them and has responded well to them. They have given me hope and encouragement for my child's future. The information and support first steps has provided for my family has been a blessing. I no longer feel along and I know they care about my child and his health. These women are amazing. Thanks First Steps.

Thanks to this program the whole family is doing better not only my child.

Although our service coordinator is nice, she is very hard for me and the providers to contact; calls & emails are not returned in a timely manner if they are even returned. Our coordinator always gets us what we need it is just very hard to get a hold of her so it can take a long time to get supplies or approval for more time or just to do things. I also want to say on a more positive note how thankful I am for First Steps. I appreciate all of the help the therapist provide and all of the supplies First Step provides. I was so surprised they paid for his braces for his feet - I am very thankful. You have helped us be able to focus on him and not all of the financial burden of having a child with disabilities, and not having that stress helps make me a better parent & teacher to my child. Thank you. All of the people we have encountered with First Steps have been wonderful to work with. I feel this service has been an incredible service to my son and a great source of support to us as parents. The therapists are so dedicated and give detailed feedback which is so appreciated. They have given us ideas on things to work with my son as well as his daycare providers. I feel that the therapists have played a huge role in my son's continued progress. And it is an amazing service for the minimal monthly fee. Everyone has been so accommodating to our schedule as well. I am extremely happy and inspired that my son has mostly met the goals we set for six months after starting therapies with First Steps.

Thank you!
We were very disappointed when we were promised an OT eval for both children, but it took 6 months + to receive it. By that time, our oldest child had turned 3 and never received any eval, let alone services of OT. We LOVE all of our therapist - they genuinely care about our family. They are so supportive and willing to listen and help us!
Our therapists are always very nice & positive. My son generally gets excited to see them.

We have seen a significant improvement in our child's gross motor and speech skills. We are very thankful for the therapists. They have given us great ideas and educated us on activities that we can work on with my child during the week. We will miss working with the therapists once our child ages out. Please pass these accolades onto our therapists.
This program is an absolute asset to my daughter's growth and development. We love our therapists. They are an extension of our family and have my daughter's continued progression first on their minds. I hope this service is continued to be provided to all those who have children with disabilities and available with the ease that it was offered and presented to our family.
We are so impressed with how professional & helpful our First Steps coordinators and therapists are. We are truly lucky & blessed to have access to such great services! Our son and our family have benefitted a lot so far. Thank You!

The two women that would come out to our home were very nice & positive. We've met w/ them a total of maybe 6 times. The 1st two time were great. They played, talked, & instructed my child to learn. But the last few times, They just came out & chit chatted, letting her play w/ they're toys they brought. They were not "teaching" her anything.

First Steps is a great program I just wish my son's Dr. would have told me about it. My service Coord. Is WONDERFUL always prompt to answer questions return emails & phone calls. I am so thankful for this program. I have health insurance but it's not good at all, I have no clue how I would pay for services with out first steps. Thank you so much
Great Experience for us & our child.

In speaking with other parents of premature children I am not sure that all hospitals share the possibility of first steps for their child, in the same manner the remarkable staff at St. Louis Children's hospital did with us. Overall what started as a horrifying and scary event with our son's very early arrival (27 weeks) we were blessed with great staff at the BEST hospital, followed by a great Service Coordinator and an angel in our first steps service provider. These services have truly been a blessing for our family.

To Date my experience w/ First Steps has been beyond my expectations. I cannot tell you what a difference the level of care has meant to my family. I am so grateful for this program and know we would feel lost if it weren't for the First Steps Program.

Our service coordinator - the greatest coordination ever.
Speech therapist - worked hard to get hours needed for her

Thank you all sooo much!

We have been very thankful for the First Steps program. Our son has been in the program for 5 months and has already made so much progress. The therapists have been wonderful to work with and the coordinator does a great job. We had no idea what First Steps was until our third child. What a great program it is. Thank You!

* I don't think First Steps directly gave me tools to obtain these things. No one "taught" me to advocate or how to work w/ professionals. I think this is just an inappropriate question because I don't think that is something F.S. is supposed to do - or should necessarily do.

I like FS. Services because my SC is awesome at coordinating the team & explaining things. I like the financial help FS provides so my son can get Early Intervention therapies.

Our experience with First Steps was wonderful! Our physical therapist was outstanding at working with our son & providing us with tools & ideas.

Thank you!
First Steps is an amazing program and all of the people who work for them are great as well!

The only part of the program I was not happy with was that we had to wait for our daughter to qualify for the program. My daughter had a physician & genetic diagnosis of Williams Syndrome which is associated with 90-95% of people with the syndrome having developmental delays.

My family loves the First Step Program they've worked with us since we brought my son home from the hospital and he has improved so much Thank you.

First Steps has dramatically improved the quality of our child's life. I feel much more confident in my ability to help her and her potential to lead a successful life. First Steps is so important to our family.

We love our service coordinator!

We have really enjoyed our PT & development specialists. They have helped our son exceed expectations. He looks forward to "playing" w/ them & cries when they leave. Thanks =)

23B For me, after a therapist leaves, I usually feel inadequate and overwhelmed with how much I have to do, how much is expected of me. 23D And for us, The more time has gone on, the more we had to lower the expectations for our child's future (he did not have a typical diagnosis)

We love [staff member]

I am very concerned about the changes that are being made. Every therapist that is coming into our home is very important, needed, and appreciated. Cutting down on services isn't going to help these children. Each therapist has training in a certain area. Having a speech therapist do occupational therapy is like having a nurse do surgery. It can cause more harm than good. Please reconsider the "team approach". I know money is always the issue but autism and other learning disabilities has become so prevalent that I can't imagine what our society is going to be like without the children getting help that they need. The end result - a government paying disability for people unable to work?

I have enjoyed working with our service coordinator.

First Steps is a great program that I would recommend to any and everyone. I love the services that they give to me and my child. Thanks.

The first step program doesn't seem to take in consideration special needs multiples (i.e.: twins, triplets, etc.) & the needs of the family. Also, re-assessment seemed to be discourage b/c of the fact there probably was not a 50% delay 6-mo. Later even if didn't meet criteria initial. A lot can change in 6-mo & the longer we wait, the more delay there can be for the child. The program says it is an individualize plan but it seemed to our service coordinator was basing her opinions on what works best is MOST families. On a positive note, WE LOVED OUR SPEECH THERAPIST!! The providers seem very knowledgeable that we came in contact with

We have found to the First Steps program to be so helpful. My child has advances so much in the past few months, it's quite amazing. I don't know what we would have done without this program. Everyone has been so wonderful, we are so thankful for First Steps.

We have told all our family & friends what First Steps has given us. I really can't imagine families that don't have this amazing resource!! We can never thank First Steps, & more specifically, the staff, enough. They truly have gone above and beyond to help us be better parents for our daughter & helped through some rough times. I am actually more concerned abt getting through the next few years without them because they have been so invaluable :) Our Speech therapist has been our greatest help over the last year. She has helped in so many areas.

I think First Steps is a great program and I would be a strong advocate for more funding to this program instead of USS! As a mother and a registered nurse I understand & appreciate the extraordinary benefits from the therapies first steps provide! I see it first hand in my profession & in my daughter!

We are just starting to use First Steps' services for our 10 month old daughter, but I have been very pleased so far.

First Steps showed me tool to help my little one in communication as well as patients she is doing great!

I love First Steps! I truly think everyone there are really great the person who see's my daughter is a very special person inside & out. She is always just a phone call away and has gone out of her way for our whole family! And always gives us great & helpful information to help us understand how important & how to help our daughter become her best. We are very thankful to have learned about First Steps & are very grateful! Thank you soo-soo much!

We have been through two different special needs instructors and they have both been extremely different!! One was giving us unrealistic expectations about our child and his needs and the second has been wonderful. She gives us realistic expectations and provides us with tools we can apply to our family and gives us the support we NEED. I wish that we would have met our second instructor first. Otherwise time would not have been wasted! I think that providers all need to be on the same educational and skill level as one another. Thanks!

For the most part we have had a positive experience with First Steps. At one time though we had a speech therapist that was not what we needed in a provider. She knows her stuff but it wasn't what we were looking for with my child. I was able to contact our coordinator, voice my concerns, and she was able to connected us with a provider that was just what we needed and my child has made so much progress in a short period of time. Please make sure in the future that you keep it, so that other parents have the choice to be able to ask for someone else if the need arises.

First Steps has helped me work with my son better and learn more about his delays and it helped him a great deal
Thank you

Our special instructor was fabulous. She was great with our daughter and we saw improvements with her in a matter of weeks. We will forever be grateful for the first steps program!

My team was awesome! They were so excited to see the progress as we were! They were easy to work with & we learned a lot! Thank You!

This program has been incredible. Our son is pretty severely limited, but the PT and OT have been tremendous, helping him to achieve for more than we ever thought possible.

We had a wonderful coordinator at Boone County Family Resources. We'll miss talking with her now that we are assigned to a new coordinator. She was kind, attentive & professional in a non-threatening manner.

We are extremely grateful for first steps and the staff. We have seen major improvement in our son's development each time they have came!
They do a wonderful thing for children and for families!
Thank you!

While in First Steps my child has gained muscle tone, some vocabulary, become more mobile in public w/ use of a wheelchair that 1st Steps staff recommended, and gained substantial oral readings. Without 1st steps I would no be able to have kept up w/ all my child's therapeutic needs or been able to get equipment she needs for therapy.

Everyone should know of first steps I have several grand children that we never knew first steps existed. Thank you so much with all our hearts

First Steps is a wonderful program and I'm very thankful for it. This program has helped my child very much and it is very convenient to use, especially when everyone works together.

Our service coordinator is excellent - I would suggest doing whatever is possible to keep her on staff. She has always gone above & beyond to obtain money And equipment for our daughter. We would not be as educated or be doing the therapies we're doing now if it wasn't for her pushing to get things done. We truly appreciate the First Steps program and would be more than happy to have our daughter be a poster child for the program as we could never have afforded all the costs associated with her rehabilitation. Please call me if needed.

I have a foster baby I just want to say he is doing wonderful. The lady that helps us a lot is great I'm glad she is here to help him and family. Thanks.

We are very happy with the whole First Steps program & feel very fortunate to have had so many wonderful therapies available to us. Our service coordinator has always listen to our needs & has done an excellent job of helping us through the First Steps process. Not sure what we would have done w/out her help & this program. Thank You!

I am very pleased with all the therapists.

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my First Step co-coordinator for all she has done to help me with services. As a foster mom I have had contact with her regarding children in my care. Two years ago I became involved in First Step as the result of adopting a newborn who had a severe stroke in utero. Presently I have four therapist involved in his care. He will be leaving Oct. 21, 2010 as he will turn three.

I know little about upcoming changes for those coming into the new system. I just want to say I am grateful for the old system. I/we have benefited tremendously from all our different therapist that I can't imagine having one person managing for several specialized therapist. There was always excellent communication and cooperation between the therapist that I believe our son was given the best by each specialized therapist.

Please, please evaluate each child on a case by case basis. The success of parental involvement and "best interest of the child" are at stake. Thanks to the program we have experienced we feel confident that we are equipped with the knowledge to provide our son with the best life possible!

I have been so pleased with this program. The providers our coordinator chose are awesome! My daughter's coordinator is extremely efficient and kind. We are so blessed to be participating in this program.

We are very happy with our First Steps Service coordinator but are not very happy with our PT's - they charge for more time than they are with our children & really don't do much or anything with our children but watch them play. Very disappointing!

The First Steps Program was an answered prayer for my child. Thank you so much!

Love it! Keep up the great work!

Thank you so much for the work that your program has done for my family & child. We appreciate all the time taken to help our son! Everyone is always warm & friendly and works well with my child!
Thanks again!

When my son was born, he failed the infant hearing screening. Unfortunately, we were not notified by the hospital. We received notification from the state health department that he would need to be re-tested. We had his hearing checked four times before we were finally referred to a specialist in St. Louis @ Children's Hospital. After undergoing an ABR, it was discovered he has moderate to severe hearing loss, and that is when First Steps was introduced to us. (by the time we had the ABR done, my son was 7-8 months old). We have been very happy w/ First Steps ever since, but there is an obvious disconnect between the hospital and doctor's offices in Cape Girardeau, MO, and the First Step services.

The service providers were always prepared and extremely helpful, therefore we didn't feel the need to contact the service coordinator for any further assistance.

-> please improve website

love the matrix but not helpful if it is not updated

-> maybe add section where parents can provide feedback on therapists or add a blog for ideas/tips re: different areas of development

I believe that the first Steps Program Has Helped Me & my Child. I think she Can Still use their Services to Help better my daughter & Get Farther in Life so that she will not be behind all the Children Her Age. Thanks A lot First Steps Especially our service providers They Really worked well with Her.

We love our staff They've become family members in our home and each therapist has a unique personality that has opened our daughter up to be more comfortable around lots of different people! We thank God that First Steps has lead us in the right direction to teach us how to be the advocates that she needs. Bless You

Our staff is wonderful. They treat our daughter as she is part of their family. We could not ask for more wonderful people to care for her.

My child and family are much better off by receiving services through First Steps. All of her therapist through United Services for the handicap are amazing. However, we are now on our third service coordinator and is has only been one year. More consistency in the area would be fantastic.

We were not pleased with how long it took us to receive Speech Therapy Services. Although it only took us 6 or 7 months from our child's birth, we were very frustrated with having to wait. It bothers us to hear about other families having to wait 2 years for services.

Although we are pleased with our therapists, we were very disappointed to hear that the speech therapists are no longer allowed to bring their own tools into the home. My family usually cannot afford the tools that the therapists are able to provide.

First Steps has been wonderful for my child

It will Be nice if the OT and Pt Would Show up on Time and If They Do no come It would Be nice if They Would Call They forget To Do This and sometimes They Tell me Sorry They forgot about me and I am not Very happy with Them and This is not just sometimes its all The time That They Do This I Do like Peggy and Brett I Just Don't like That They Do show up

Our premature daughter has been in First Steps since her release from the hospital. Every person in the program has genuinely cared about her and our family! We are most enthusiastic supporters of First Steps!

Our coordinator is a wonderful person. Very helpful, considerate, compassionate, professional, and keeps her promises to do things. We would not be where we are today without her! She does everything in her power to get what we need & more. I wish our son could remain in 1st Steps for ever. Sad to know we only have 300 days left!

Keep up the wonderful work you guys do!

Explanation of info into school system at age 3 needs multiple visits and/or phone conversations. If possible the First Steps coordinators need to be better versed in opportunities such as Regional Center, MPACT, programs at SSD related to IEP process, etc... this is a very confusing time for families, esp. those not familiar with the St. Louis city/county school systems. I realize some of this problem is funding and people doing the best they can with available resources. Perhaps pairing families that have a child that recently started school & has an IEP with those of us newly embarking on this trek through a messy jungle!

I'm so glad to live in a state that offers this kind of program for families like myself w/ special needs. My Serv. Coordinator this time around is the best! She always returns my calls and emails me back promptly, no matter how many times I ask for help. She has made this challenging lifestyle a breeze, cause I can always count on her for assistance. I don't think I would change anything about your program. Thank you for all your programs and assistance!

I can't say enough on how First Steps has helped our family. Our therapist have all been wonderful, our coordinator has been with us for 2 years now and has never disappointed us. Our daughter could not be where she is without First Steps. When she was born 2 years ago with Down Syndrome we were shocked and overwhelmed. We were told to call your office and as soon as we did everything seemed to fall in place. Because I chose to quit my job at that point, there is no way, even after insurance, that we could have provided her with all the therapies she now gets. Thank You! (I feel we are a true "success story" with First Steps and would be happy to provide additional comments if needed)

the First Steps program is the greatest program I could of included my child in. His therapists are the greatest people ever. They work so well with my son and he just loves them. You have a very well organized staff and they work so well with children. I have to say thank you to all the first steps individuals. You have all helped my son come a long way. Thank You !! :)

Excellent Program

1st Steps program is good, but I'm not here to gossip with my daughter's therapist.

When a therapist cancels for personal reasons, we feel they should make every opportunity to make up the session. We pay whether they are here or not. Some of our therapist will finish with their previous appointment early and come to our house early. It usually fine, however, I have been asked to wake them up early from their (twins) nap. She actually annoyed when I refused and tried to leave an hour after she got there, not an hour after therapy started. With twins as scheduled is so important. A cranky kiddo doesn't want to do to anyway. As parents, we use our own therapist's suggestion and goals as homework. Its like our lesson plans to work on throughout the week. When leaving early, we feel it takes away not only from our children but our "education" as well. One of our own therapist is a smoker :(This is her personal choice but she should definitely not smoke in her car and then immediately work with preemies with chronic lung disease. I encourage just as hospitals, during work hours, no smoking.

First Steps has been extremely valuable in the development of our son who has spastic diplegia. The service coordinator has been a huge support to our family and has been extremely compassionate and thorough in her coordination and execution of our services. She has been very professional and has always helped us to realize appropriate services and solutions. We have learned a lot from our services providers and they have been an integral part in our sons success over they past years. I feel strongly that he has accomplished most of what he has because of the constant support from our providers. These are truly amazing women and we are fortunate to count them among our developmental team members. We are all better for having them in our lives. As parents, we have learned so much from our service providers. We have been taught how to best help our son be successful in our home environment and how to adapt to his specific needs and how to make all of us comfortable with his abilities. We feel very strongly that First Steps is an invaluable resource for families of kids w/special needs.

I do feel that service coordinators are not as quick to respond, give information or aid in getting new services put in place as they could be. I don't feel that the parent (me) should have to remind the service coordinator to set up meeting or put into motion new therapies after they've been approved.

I wish that you pay only for the services you receive. For example one month due to holidays and bad weather we only had speech services one time instead of the usual four but yet we still paid for 4.

This program has been extremely helpful in teaching me & my family how to play with our baby in a manner that will help him grow in his development. I enjoy the visits & can tell, my baby does too

1

First Steps id doing a great job on their part. The only thing I have problems with is getting more help through other groups. I have to get papers, call people, they call people and its like a big circle. If First Steps can just tell me what I need to the ball rolling faster to the most help possible through other groups it would be helpful and I will also put in good effort to get more help.

I wish there was an easier way to pay than mailing in a check!

My daughter has really "blossomed" & come into her own since starting her therapy. We are so grateful for everything that everyone involved has done to help her improve and keep progressing. Thank you so much for this program. God bless.

I love my therapy team for my son. The service providers have been a tremendous help for our family. Thank you all.

The meetings are to long. With 2 children I can only take so much to meet. Plus the meetings are so drawn out! Additional - we have been loaned equipment for our daughter. The equipment was unsafe! No one (professional) has inspected it before being loaned out. What a safety hazard & liability! That needs to be addressed immediately!

We checked "does not apply" on 24 & 25 because we already felt we could work with professionals before we became involved with First Steps, and we also already know how to advocate for our child

Our service providers @ the Special Learning Center are our Earth's Angels. We are very blessed to have them in our lives

My mother in law found out about MO. First Steps after doing an internet search. It took a few phone calls & a game or two of phone tag, but it was found eventually. I had never heard of MO First Steps until the day my mother in law found it. I am so glad she found you all! I cannot begin to explain how happy I am w/ the services provided to my son & our family. Thank You!

Thank God for this program! I don't know where my son would be today. The little boy who at 18 mos could barely say 4 words is now rated in the high average range for speech/language! Thank you for helping to better his life and ours!

We are very happy with our service coordinator and provider but we feel the amount of therapy we receive each month is inadequate.

While I appreciate first steps concern for my child, I don't believe my child was helped. I seemed to me that first steps attempted to do nothing more than any responsible parent should have been doing. Regrettably, in our case, I feel that the program is a waste of taxpayer's money.

Service providers should understand, as should 1st steps facilitators, that parents of children w/ special needs have to work 9-5 M-F too. I feel that families would benefit from providers that worked evening & weekends. I am a single parent & receive no other financial assistance for my daughter other than Medicaid. I can not continue to miss work for IFSP meetings or for PT. Please consider this as the benefit will outweigh the cost.

We just started, so I think its been great so far!

They helped my son feel more confident about himself and his movements. He improved in his gross motor functions and has caught up to where he should be. In some ways beyond his peers. I thank first steps for this. All of the help we received has made all the difference.

I will say the only reason we found out about the program was that a work associate of my mother had used first steps for her child and they too loved the program all the help the provided. I feel that the program is an asset to Missouri and its families. I wish it were better known to parents with children who have special needs.

Once again, Thank you for working with our family. Thank you for helping our son find his first steps, climbs, words and more. You expanded his world and woke up his muscles.

The First Steps program was wonderful! Thank you so much for all of the help we received.

The team members are great w/ our family & family needs. It's because of the first Steps program that my son gets the help he needs & we truly appreciate that first steps is a big part of our family needs! Since we started first Steps my Son has been showing great improvements & I'm very happy w/ our team! So Thank- You so much! I don't know what we would do w/ out first steps it has truly improved our life's! =)

Sincerely w/ much Thanks

First Steps has been very beneficial for my child and our family. My only complaint was that it took 3 months to get started with the therapists from the time my doctor helped us apply. A lot of steps down the chain, it took longer than we wanted to get the ball rolling especially with a child that really needed extra attention. Other than that we were very grateful for the assistance. One more tip: It would be nice to have the therapists help us learn how to teach our child with our own toys. I felt like sometimes we needed to buy different toys like the ones they had.

Both of my son therapists are great!

My son absolutely loved his time with his therapists.. She was very knowledgeable in Helping Child learn and develop while in a fun way that he enjoyed.

First Steps is an answer to prayers. It has afforded our family the ability to provide needed service to 2 of our boys. Opened doors to many opportunities for them. Our coordinator and therapists are amazing people.

We are very pleased with the services we are receiving at First Steps. We are especially happy with our service coordinator, and our special instructor! These two individuals are true assets to the program & continually go above and beyond for our little boy. We cannot thank them enough. Thank you for offering such an amazing program - we would be lost without it!!

We love our first steps Team They do a great job and go out of their way to help me in areas other than their field.

First Steps is a tremendous program: Without their help, my daughter would have fallen behind, but because of their help she is high functioning & continuously improving in all areas. As well, my therapists help calm my nerves & give me a progress on my daughter the help me see she is improving right on track!

We are very happy and pleased with the First Steps Program

My son was born @ 28 wks & receives several therapy services that have helped him a lot these past 2 yrs.

Service coordinator was great but follow through on some things was lacking. But overall she was great

one issue is with orthotics for my child, issues with billing & payment takes FOREVER, which created a huge gap in when my child was going to get new orthodontics. His problem only got worse because of billing/payment issues.

Thank you!

My daughter is doing so well. First Steps is a great program. I think every baby could use First Steps. It helps parents, I am a first time parent so it works out great. I don't have any concerns about my child, she's doing great. She's just a normal baby. She loves her therapist. And I am so proud of my daughter, my focus is only on my baby to start walking, because everything else she's already doing. But I think First Steps is very important for her and will help her get walking. But the developmental therapist and other therapist are great and they work well with my baby daughter. They show me lots of things to do and even help give me ideas for feeding times too. Thank you all for First Steps!!!

God Bless!!!

& Take Care.

Our service providers are awesome. They have done a great job at listening to my concerns and helping overcome them. They are truly an asset for the program!

I wish my service coordinator would call back in a timely manner. I called back to reschedule my sons appointment and she just picked a time and date for us. As she did the one we were rescheduling.

Our PT & PTA are absolutely wonderful!!

We have been very thankful for & appreciative of the First Steps program. We attribute our child's successes directly to the providers working with him. Our service coordinator has been patient, informative, & efficient. For the sake of all at-risk & special needs children we hope funding continues to be granted for the most vulnerable among us...the babies!

I am extremely please with all the help my son and family have received through the First Steps program. I firmly believe that without the support of our providers my son would be drastically behind developmentally. He still has a way to go before he catches up with his peers, but the First Steps team and his soon to be pre-school team all believe that he is progressing at a rate all his own and with the services that will soon be provided through our school district we all have good reason to think he will thrive. I am so thankful that we had this valuable service available to our family. Thank You!

Everything has been wonderful! WE did change OT's one time. She wasn't bad I just didn't think she was best for my child. We are very happy with the new one and his other therapists. I know they are why he is developing so quickly.

Our overall experience with the First Steps has been a positive one. Everyone we have met and worked with have been wonderful with one exception. We has an OT for a short time. Our few visits and encounters with her were very negative. She came across as very rude and unprofessional. Scheduling a time for her to come was nearly impossible and by the time we did connect my child no longer needed her services. Because she was no longer needed we felt it wasn't necessary to speak to anyone about her behavior. However in taking this survey and looking over the last year and remembering our experiences with First Steps, we could not help but reflect on our negative encounters as well as the positive.

I love all my daughter's therapists! Its so nice to see people care so much about their kids they work with ! Thank you for this program! We feel so blessed to be able to participate in it!

Our service coordinator is absolutely AMAZING! Very knowledgeable and makes you feel very comfortable. Easy to talk to and ask anything! She is very open and always available.

We love the first steps program! Without it our son would be much more delayed. With the help of the program he's developed much better than our prognosis expected & it has helped our family to realize the role it can play in helping him in every step.

Therapists need to communicate with family members (parents). I feel the therapists should contact parents on a weekly basis & go over with them what they are working on & what should be doing @ home to help.

We have had help to make sure we are giving our daughter the care she needs to improve. She is catching up. Thank you so much, you are awesome.

I marked some as "does not apply" because I don't think my child is "disabled". She just has some speech issues. That is one of the reasons I Love this program. Your child doesn't need to have a disability to get the help they nee. Every one is so nice and knowledgeable (sp). Thank you!

We love our service coordinator. The only trouble we ever had was w/ the service coordinator before her.

Our family needs programs like first steps if it hadn't been for them I don't know where we be right now

My self and my family are greatly appreciative of all the help and support each and everyone has given my son.
Thank you.

Service Coordinator is not use full what So ever the speech therapist and her supervisor helps out a lot or has our service coordinator makes appointments but does not help them which can be a problem Speech therapist is awesome about showing up want to add more services but service coordinator has yet to set this up

Love this program. You make it very easy for new parents. We would have been in debt up to our eyeballs if it wasn't for FIRST STEPS. I can't say enough great things! THANK YOU =)

We would be so behind on my son's learning needs without First Steps & early head start, I wouldn't know what to do without the help from these wonderful services. (people) Thank you so much. God bless.

I LOVE our speech therapist she has help in so many areas and my son is so much less frustrated.

I agree with all statements. #10 & 11 I don't remember so could not answer honestly. We have had to S.C. and both were helpful in the same manner just different personalities

I am very thankful for the services we have received. Our daughter is so much happier now because she can move. I don't know what we would have done w/out this program! Our quality of life would have been a lot lower.

My child has only been involved in the program for a short time but I have been very happy with the services she has qualified for and all of the tools I have been given to help my child progress and be successful.

We have just recently got a new service coordinator who is amazing. The last one we had was terrible.

A better website would be nice in assisting new families with gaining services. I had a hard time navigating around the current one. My child has come so far that we rarely use services anymore. However, it is a blessing to still be listed with "service coordinator" we just used our coordinator to get in touch with an OT for a fine motor assessment. So helpful - First Steps is a great program!

I referred myself to First Steps because my daughter's pediatrician was no alarmed or concerned about her development. After extensive searching I found First Steps and I wish I had a lot sooner. I think EVERY parent should know about your program. It is so frustrating when you know your child needs help that you can't or don't know how to help them. I still keep in touch with my daughter's OT, ST, SI, and SC. My daughter never had a "diagnosis" but her behavior has positively changed in a very dramatic way. I have my daughter back thanks to these ladies and this program. Thank you so much!

(reply to Q.28) Haven't seen her or talked to her since we started!

First Steps is an excellent program but we would have never known about it unless we were told about them during a visit from Parents As Teachers. Parents as Teachers is the program that pushed us in the right direction. First Steps was there as soon as they got the referral from Parents As Teachers. Strongly feel we need both programs.

1. Waste of money and trees, I, fortunately, pay nothing for First Steps. However, every single month since we started in First Steps, I have received a statement indicating \$0.00 balance with a return envelope. How wasteful is that! That wastes time, money and is not very green at all! I would think whoever does your billing could not print statements for those clients who don't owe anything. Why include a return envelope when there will not be a payment made? Waste, waste, waste!!!! 2. Since my son is transitioning from First Steps into pre-school, we have his first IEP scheduled. What a surprise to find out his therapists could not attend. Oh, of course they could attend if they chose to not be paid or if I paid them. These therapists are an integral part of my son's life and should be able to attend his 1st IEP if I think it is important for them to be there. Perhaps if I was not sent statements where I owed nothing, the therapists could be paid. 3. The IFSP's need to be changed. They are so hard to understand. They certainly are not very "reader-friendly." Maybe parents need to give input in how to improve them. Thanks for first steps! We have received many benefits from this program and our son is where he is because of it!!

1st Step in very helpful with ideas & suggestion. And helpful for knowing where tools are located at to help with therapy.

We are very grateful for all the help through F.S. program!

This is a wonderful program and it has provided assistance that has been needed. The providers/therapists have been great and a wonderful resource.

We work with a wonderful PT. She goes beyond expectations for my family. She deserves to be rewarded for her hard work.

Thanks to the program my child is doing wonderfully! THANK YOU!

First Steps has been very helpful for my daughter. I know the First Steps system extremely well, and as much as the providers have helped my daughter, I cannot wait to get out of the program. The SPOE is a mess and it always seems that my SE doesn't have time for me. I have had to fight to get our services and I cannot imagine what families who do not know the program go through. I am familiar with other SPOE regions and wish that I lived in another region. It seems that this region is less about the child, when speaking with other families and providers in other regions. If I could receive the services without the SPOE involved, this would be the best option for my family. Everyone has been great. We could not have asked for better people.

We are so glad to have had First Steps services. Our child's Dr. did not tell us anything regarding child development. Until we asked for a referral to developmental center who then referred us to first steps, our child's delay had not been assessed. The early intervention has helped us get the next step started and our daughter will be starting early education with the school system. Thanks to the early therapy our daughter is walking/running and is on her way to using more meaningful speech. Thank You.

It is very difficult to be proactive in this system. I would like to start working on a skill before it becomes a major delay and the program waits until my child is without question behind before services added.

Thank you for three months of speech therapy. The progress made in in such a short time was amazing. She is now continuing through parents as teachers.

At the beginning of our treatment my daughter was only able to get therapy once a month. The only problem with that is... since she only saw her service coordinator once a month, she would not cooperate with her because she didn't know her. It is so much better doing therapy once a week.

Therapists are wonderful. Everyone we have worked with are knowledgeable, helpful and professional. They are very committed to helping us keep our son and his caregivers too.

I am an educator & realized my child had issues early on. I had to beg & plead to even get my child an evaluation & even then it was done to "pacify" me- now if we want or need services adjusted or kept, we have to fight for it- While my providers are wonderful (they were in place & I was paying privately while I fought to get her evaluated by first steps) , the process to get evaluated was atrocious! Had I been less informed parent and not realized how I had to advocate my child's development would have suffered at the hand of the arrogance of the people on First Steps end-

Our child has ABA therapy as part of our IFSP. Our implementer/teach of ABA is excellent in our sessions that are 1-on-1 and when she joins our other teachers/therapists to help them with ABA implementation in the their sessions. What frustrates me is having to add ABA supervisor to our sessions as well. I surely become overwhelming to a 2 yr old to have that many adults in the room and little gets accomplished in those sessions. I would suggest that a better requirement might be a supervisor visit every other month. (We currently have 3 monthly ABA sessions with a supervisor trying to attend at least one of those sessions.)

We loved our therapists!! You are both amazing! You will be missed.

I don't know what we would have done without First Steps. We are so grateful for the therapy we receive. He we been required to fund all of her services with our private insurance it would have been impossible for us. Our daughter has needed some additional medical services that have required a lot of our resources. She is becoming very self sufficient as a result of our therapies. We feel very well positioned to transition into a school environment. Thank you for everything!

We are so grateful for the 1st steps program! Can't imagine life without them. I can tell other parents there is help out there for your special needs baby/child. Especially those considering adoption. Thank You!

First Steps has been a blessing to our family. At a time when we felt overwhelmed with medical issues and the care of our child would need, our providers have helped us realize that we can do this. And more importantly, that we can help our son do what he needs to do to live a productive and happy life. Our providers are son knowledgeable and explain things to us completely. I just don't want to imagine when our son's development and our emotional state would be without First steps.

The First Steps Program is absolutely wonderful! Our coordinators have helped us learn how to maximize our son's potential & provide the needed therapies that allow him to thrive! We are grateful for all they have done.

1. Our service coordinator is WONDERFUL! She is so easy to work with and listens to me and my concerns. 2. I think speech therapy should be offered as a separate service and not combined with occupational therapy. Even though speech therapy can be covered by OT when a child has a problem eating a more specialized professional would be better.

When we first started with First Steps our first was helpful, easy to work with, and timely. Our second service coordinator later changed and this has been less timely and helpful. Meetings are often delayed and proper notification hasn't gone out to all therapists for IFSP meetings. I fell services have been delayed because of this and multiple calls have to be made. It seems there are always reasons why things are delayed or why proper notification hasn't been sent.

Our service Coordinator was helpful, easy to work with, and timely. Our service coordinator later changed. Working with our new service coordinator has been less timely and helpful. Meetings are often delayed and proper notification hasn't gone out to all therapists for IFSP meetings. I fell services have been delayed because of this and multiple calls have to be made. It seems there are always reasons why things are delayed or why proper notification hasn't been sent.

We are very happy with the services we receive

First Steps is a very good program & my family & I are very appreciative for all they have done to get my daughter where she is now! She's finally talking!!!

Our therapist is awesome. She works so well with our child!!

We love our coordinator. She is very helpful & friendly & helps us with everything we need! We will miss her when our son is out of the program.

My child's therapists have played a critical role in obtaining a correct diagnosis for my child.

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Our service coordinator is exceptional. She's flexible in scheduling, compassionate, interested, & efficient. Excellent experience. Thank you,

Thank you!

Our service providers are great with my child. They have been a wonderful help to me and my son. I can see much improvement. I am so happy that First Steps has helped me.

I was very disappointed in our OT service provided and the fact that I couldn't get a replacement. We were not considered a top priority to her and I wish I could still have OT for my child, but it can't because he wouldn't work with her and there was no replacement. Everyone else was amazing and I depend on them greatly. They have been absolutely wonderful!

Everyone at first steps that I have met has been not only helpful but friendly as well they have been so understanding and willing to work with my busy schedule. We could not have asked for better workers. Our service providers are so awesome!! Thank you all very much!!

We are having a wonderful experience w/ First Steps. My son is excited every time she arrives!

We love our therapists - both OT and PT are great. The PT match at first was not a good one but after 6 months review we were able to make a change that was better for us and our child. Wish the change could have been sooner. We love 1st steps, please keep it going, our child has made so much progress.

Awesome service coordinator.

We are grateful for the help First Steps has provided us. I don't know what we would have done without it. My only complaint is that I wish we could have had speech therapy more than one time a week as my son's disability requires speech additional times a week. Otherwise our therapists we do have are wonderful. Everyone of them has been a pivotal and important part of my son's growth and development. I'm grateful we have had the opportunity to work with a variety of therapists who have various areas of expertise and hope that same opportunity continues to be provided to other families.

I don't know how we have had 3 different service coordinators over the past 12 months for our daughter. The only one I felt knew her needs was the first coordinator who was with us the longest. I would like to see the service coordinators stay with their kids for longer periods of time if not forever.

I feel that the first step program should be more readily available to more children. The program (therapist) have helped my family, son, and daycare teacher so much. I am so thank you that I heard about the program and that my child qualified. It took me a little while after researching/talking with others to actually find out about the program. When I did speak with someone they repeatedly reminded me that there was a good possibility that my child would not qualify. He did qualify and after just 6 months of OT & ST we all have seen great improvement. If for some reason we didn't qualify, I don't know where we would be right now. So thank you everyone. :)

My husband and I found out about first steps in the hospital after Seth's birth and diagnosis. We were immediately contacted to set up PT, OT, and any other related services. We have the best PT & OT. We are at our end - our son is almost 3. We are so grateful for First Steps program. I have been teaching for almost 18 years and have learned a bunch from having First Steps. Thank you so much!

I have been very happy overall with the services we have received from First Steps, both from the service coordinator and therapists. The only thing I have struggled with is getting my daughter's shoe inserts in a timely fashion (#13). Thank you for all the help you have given our family.

First Steps is a wonderful program. Without First Steps I would have no idea how to handle my child's needs.

Honestly it is my OT who to me makes this program such a wonderful, easy going experience! Kudos to First Steps for hiring her!

I wasn't aware of the services my daughter really needed until I became acquainted with First Steps personnel and it was very helpful.

If it was not for the First Steps program, I don't think my child would be where he is today. He is a happy, vibrant, thriving child.

Don't feel O.T. really addressed all of our child's problems. She did same therapy over & over-nothing new introduced. Got the feeling she may have been a little "burnt out".

There is no available OT

Sensory integration should be included for children who need it. It is an important therapy for younger students.

We are so grateful for the services provided through MO First Steps. Our therapists are professional, and are always thinking of new ways to improve the services they provide our children. They work cohesively together and appreciate the feedback they receive from each other.

My daughter had issues with walking and only crawled for a short period of time. First Steps was suggested to us to receive Physical Therapy to assist her with her problems. When her evaluation was done she scored high on everything except her gross motor skill. When First Steps contacted us back they said they did not give her credit for anything they did not see firsthand. This made me feel like they did not believe or value my input as a parent. She was signed up for physical therapy but all the therapist did was sit and play with her. My daughter could not walk and all they did for 3 months was have her sit. No physical therapy ever took place. We were not given exercises to do and the therapists never did any either. After 3 months of this they wanted to add speech therapy and occupational therapy even though my daughter scored at a 36 month level on speech (she was 20 months) The speech therapist did start therapy immediately but the words she wanted my child to learn were useless (examples: Dora, Spongebob, Patrick) not useful words like I teach her (examples: hairbrush, colors, body parts) After seeing that the only therapy my child was going to receive was not the area's she needed assistance with I finally asked the Physical Therapist when the physical part of therapy was going to begin (in the middle of our 3rd month with service) Her response was "we are happy with her progress. She is continually improving on walking." I asked if they were going to do anything and the therapist responded, "this is what we do, we are here to make sure you are doing things right." I informed her we hadn't changed our routine or activities whether they were there or not and asked to end the arrangement. I am sure other First Step programs are fantastic but the experience we had left us feeling like they were not helpful at all. If my children need help in the future I intend to use therapist in an office setting because our daughter received NO assistance through this program.

Our therapy providers have been top notch! Very respectful and knowledgeable, as well as supportive and enthusiastic. They keep things positive while keeping our expectations reasonable. I appreciate how they break things down and explain them, so that I know why I'm doing what I'm doing. I feel like I know where they're going.

Our coordinator has also been very good - excellent communication and, as far as I can tell, she gets the paperwork out to us in a timely manner.

A service is only as good as the people who provide it, and I feel very lucky that we have the team assigned to us.

Thanks!

Thank You! :)

My son was born just over the Missouri border, in Overland Park KS. Their social services personnel told me there was a program for services in MO, but my son wouldn't qualify because we lived in a rural area.

The doctors & other professionals we have come across in MO have all known & encouraged the use of The First Steps program. My only concern is that surrounding states that border MO don't appear to have much knowledge/correct info about the program.

We are blessed to have such caring individuals involved in our son's care, including our Service Coordinator, who constantly goes over & above.

Thank you!

I have been very impressed with the services my daughter has received from First Steps. We have seen a remarkable difference as she is now repeating words and able to communicate with just language. As she is now able to express things, her tantrums have decreased significantly. The music therapy for her sensory issues has calmed her down & she now makes eye contact when you talk to her. We are very pleased with her progress & credit her "success" to her 3 therapists that she sees weekly. They are all very helpful. They have helped expand her vocabulary, getting her to walk better (as she will now go down the stairs by herself with the banister) and have been absolutely amazing in helping us to address & understand her sensory issues. We will be forever grateful for her music therapy program. Thanks for a GREAT service!!

Our service coordinator is terrible. She doesn't return calls, emails. It took forever to get a meeting set up and books were supposed to be ordered for us and we still haven't seen them and the meeting was back in Feb.

A Huge Thank you to First Steps!

The only negative is that the therapists typically do not stay for the whole time. They leave before the time is up.

Service providers have been very knowledgeable & helpful (PT, OT, ST)

our service coordinator and all of his therapists are absolutely wonderful. They care about our son and his improvements. They are available for our family anytime we have questions or concerns. This is a wonderful program for Missouri's children & families

Our experience with First Steps has been tremendous!! Each person that we meet with for therapies has proven incredibly knowledgeable & helpful. This journey has been an awesome one and I feel that the First Steps Program, along with our providers, have been key to making this journey a terrific one!!

our service coordinator has been wonderful and made such a great impact on my daughter's life. Thank you for this program.

My wife and I were truly devastated to learn about our son. Since working with First Steps, he has shown great improvement all of his service providers have gone above & beyond of what is required by them. I feel that my son has a special bond with each of them and we will be forever grateful. Our service coordinator was very helpful when we first started first steps, but towards our exit, they have become a little too judgmental about our son & what services he requires. Overall, we are very satisfied with what they have given us, which is a direction to the future. When he was diagnosed our heads were spinning & first steps calmly stopped them and not only gave us the direction to go, but they also paved the road.

Thank you for this program, we should not have seen the improvements in my child without the help. Also, we probably would have given up...it has given us moral support. Thank You!

I am so thankful for the First Steps program. I have been such a blessing for our family - especially our son. WE had some difficulty determining if he was eligible at first which delayed therapy. But other than that, I have no complaints. His therapists were wonderful and really helped me learn how to help my son. Thank you, Thank you, thank you, for this program!

I cannot fully express how critically important First Steps has been in the care, understanding and development of my child. Thank-you

First Steps has been amazing for learning about my son's struggles and how I can help. They also help me not feel alone in this battle.

I wish I would have been informed of this program earlier than I was. I found out about it through a friend of mine and wish I could have had my daughter enrolled sooner - I think she would have gotten even more of an improvement. I loved our coordinator. She was great! And our speech therapist was fabulous. My daughter adored her and I looked for her to show up every week! I'm thankful for the services we did receive and am glad we got an opportunity to be involved with great people.

We as a family including our 5.5 year old daughter, have been so very thankful for the First Step program. If it wasn't for this special group, we do not know what condition our son would be in. We want to send a special Thank You for their support and guidance for bringing our son to where he is today. They will always hold a special in our hearts.

I feel think our service provider is one of the best provider I've dealt with. Our current coordinator is a great service coordinator, better than our previous one was.

Very disappointed recently- For the first time, I felt the most important thing is not my child, but instead, how much money First Steps can save. We were denied additional services by our service coordinator. It was not a "team" decision but rather a unilateral decision by the service coordinator. I had to threaten to appeal before I was given the services I feel my child needs and deserves. Very disheartening.

First Steps is fabulous! Everyone involved is incredibly positive, and our son has benefitted greatly! His providers challenge him and encourage him. I strongly feel that First Steps is the core of this current success!

First Steps has done wonders for my son!

First Steps is a wonderful program & I do not think my son would be making the progress he has made if it had not been for the services he receives. Thank you!

I wish pediatricians would suggest 1st steps more readily/quicker! In my opinion they aren't fast enough to act on the delays!

Our child is so much better as a result of intervention. He and I relate much better now too and I am finally able to enjoy parenting him. Life was difficult before First Steps, we are very very happy now!

The coordinators and teachers are outstanding, informative and readily available to answer any questions or address our concerns! Thank You!

I have received many therapists who did not do anything but talk when "helping" my daughter. I gave months for them to follow through by giving them the benefit of the doubt. After no change, I contacted the service coordinator to hire a new therapist. After the firing of the old therapist the next day the therapist retaliated and was unprofessional. I think that First Steps therapists should undergo personality interviews as this woman was too immature and unprofessional to work with special needs children. Thank You

The professionals have done an amazing job with our child they are very helpful. They have also really accommodated our schedule to set up meetings.

our PT & OT were both fantastic. They were professional, friendly, prompt, & my loved working with them. Thank You first steps!